



Canyonlands

NPS/Dan Duriscoe

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Preserving the Night

Look up on a calm, cloudless night in Canyonlands National Park and you can see the Milky Way arching across the sky—a glowing band of light created by the millions of stars that live in our celestial neighborhood. It has shimmered above what is now the park since time immemorial. Continents have moved and the landscape has changed from inland seashore to Sahara-like desert and everything in between; but above it all, the stars shining down at night have remained constant.

The night sky was once a shared heritage, common to every landscape and every people. But in the short time since the electric light bulb was patented, dark skies have been quickly disappearing from view. Today, a growing number of visitors are coming to national parks like Canyonlands specifically to experience the wonders of the night sky.

The International Dark Sky Association designated Canyonlands as an International Dark Sky Park in summer 2015. This designation not only requires the park to preserve

this precious resource but also to draw attention to its fragility.

International Dark Sky Parks are locations of exceptional nighttime beauty, night sky education, and preservation of the nighttime environment. Becoming a dark sky park requires not only documentation of excellent night skies, but also taking steps to protect them, such as ensuring park lighting never obscures the view and park visitors can observe and learn about the night sky.

Dr. Brian Greene, author of the best-selling book *The Elegant Universe*, says that a clear view of the night sky “allows anyone to soar in mind and imagination to the farthest reaches of an enormous universe in which we are but a speck. And there is nothing more exhilarating and humbling than that.” We hope that during your visit to Canyonlands you will take a moment to look up and share a view that has humbled and exhilarated people for millennia because it, like Canyonlands, is your heritage.



Canyonlands National Park is a proud member of the Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative—a voluntary effort to link communities, tribes, businesses, state and federal agencies, and citizens in a collaborative effort to celebrate the view of the cosmos, minimize the impact of outdoor lighting, and restore and preserve natural darkness on the plateau.

Have a Safe Visit

Every year, rangers respond to dozens of search and rescue incidents in the park. For your own safety, please keep the following in mind throughout your visit:



Drink water—at least 1 gallon (4 L) per day. Water is available year-round at the Needles Visitor Center, and spring through fall at Island in the Sky Visitor Center.



Rocks fall. People fall. Watch your step. Sandstone is slippery when wet or icy.



When thunder roars, go indoors. Seek shelter in a safe building or vehicle—stay away from trees and cliff edges. In winter, avoid snowy or icy trails.

FIND YOUR PARK

Find Your Park

As we prepare for the National Park Service's Centennial in 2016, we want to help you find your park! A park can be a place, an experience, or a state of mind.

You can find yours at FindYourPark.com, and share your photos or stories with the hashtag #FindYourPark.

Get up, get out there, and find your park! Visit FindYourPark.com to find parks, share stories, or find out how to get involved.



Protect Your Park Stay on Trails

This land is every bit as fragile as it is beautiful. If you step off the trail, you can easily injure the soil's living surface. When biological soil crust is damaged, it can take centuries (literally) to recover.

Help us protect park soils during your visit. Please walk on trails, rock or in sandy washes (where water flows when it rains), and keep all vehicles and bikes on designated roads.



Don't Leave Your Mark Graffiti: A Growing Problem

Even though graffiti is prohibited by law, rangers and volunteer groups spend hundreds of hours every year removing it in Canyonlands.

Protect your park: don't leave your mark. If you discover graffiti in the park, please let us know. Otherwise, make memories, take pictures, but leave no visible trace of your visit.

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Mailing Address

2282 SW Resource Blvd.
Moab, UT 84532

Phone

(435) 719-2313

Email

canyinfo@nps.gov

Website

nps.gov/cany

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Night Sky Over the Doll House
NPS Photo/Dan Duriscoe

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Stay Connected

Join Canyonlands on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr or YouTube and share your park experiences with us and our growing online community:

facebook.com/CanyonlandsNPS

twitter.com/CanyonlandsNPS

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youtube.com/CanyonlandsNPS



Thirsty?

Drinking plenty of water keeps you safe in the desert. We recommend drinking one gallon (4 L) per person per day for longer hikes. Help protect the national parks and the planet by refilling your water bottles at the following locations:

- Island in the Sky Visitor Center
- Needles Visitor Center
- Squaw Flat Campground

Exploration Awaits You

CANYONLANDS NATIONAL PARK PRESERVES 337,598 acres of colorful canyons, mesas, buttes, fins, arches, and spires in the heart of southeast Utah's high desert. Water and gravity have been the prime architects of this land, sculpting layers of rock into the rugged landscape seen today.

The park is divided into four districts by the Green and Colorado rivers. The Island in the Sky is closest to Moab and is the most visited district. The Needles is a farther drive, but is great for a day trip or backcountry hiking and backpacking. The Maze is the most remote and rugged district, requiring a four-wheel-drive, high-clearance vehicle and more time. The rivers separate the other three districts and offer world-class boating opportunities. While the districts share a primitive desert atmosphere, each retains its own character and offers different opportunities for exploration and adventure.

There are no roads in the park that directly link the districts. They may appear close on a map, but traveling between them requires two to six hours by car as there are few places to cross the rivers. Most people find it impractical to visit more than one or two districts in a day. Check inside this visitor guide for the best way to plan your visit to Canyonlands.



General Information

INFORMATION CENTERS

Canyonlands operates visitor centers spring through fall in each district. Outside the park, Blanding (on US 191), Moab (at the corner of Center and Main streets) and Monticello (in the Frontier Museum, corner of US 191 and 200 South) have information centers with knowledgeable staff, brochures, and maps.

FOOD, GAS, LODGING AND OTHER SERVICES

Food, gas, lodging and other amenities are not available in Canyonlands. Come prepared with adequate food, fuel, and water. These may be found in nearby towns—see next page for mileage.

GETTING AROUND

There is no public transportation to or within Canyonlands. A list of commercial tour operators is available on our website.

FEES

Fees are charged for park entrance, camping, and backcountry permits. Eighty percent of the fees collected at Canyonlands are returned to the park to address priority needs in maintenance, infrastructure, resource management, and visitor services. The following fees are in effect for Canyonlands:

- Entrance Fee: \$10/vehicle, \$5/individual
- Interagency Annual Pass: \$80 / Local Annual Pass: \$25
- Developed Campgrounds:
 - Squaw Flat (Needles) - \$15/night
 - Willow Flat (Island in the Sky) - \$10/night
 - Group Sites (Needles) - \$3/person/night

Note: Fees are scheduled to increase in fall 2015.

CAMPING

There are campgrounds in both the Needles and Island in the Sky districts. These campgrounds offer toilets, picnic tables and fire rings. Sites are first-come, first-served, except for group sites in the Needles, which may be reserved in advance. Maximum RV length is 28 feet in most sites. There are also many campgrounds outside the park.

BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS AND RESERVATIONS

All overnight travel in the backcountry, day use on Lavender Canyon, and Horse Canyon roads, and beginning September 1, day use on White Rim and Elephant Hill roads, requires a permit. Canyonlands accepts reservations for overnight backcountry permits up to four months in advance at canypermits.nps.gov. Reservations are not accepted for individual sites at Squaw Flat or Willow Flat campgrounds. Reservations for group campsites in the Needles district can be made at www.recreation.gov.

RANGER PROGRAMS

Evening programs and overlook talks are offered April through October as staffing allows. Check for posted schedules at visitor centers and campgrounds.

ACCESSIBILITY

At the Island in the Sky, visitors with mobility impairments can access the visitor center and restrooms, Buck Canyon Overlook, Green River Overlook, and Grand View Point Overlook. In the Needles, the visitor center, restrooms, Squaw Flat Campground, and Wooden Shoe Overlook are wheelchair accessible. Other points of interest may be accessible with some assistance.

TRAVELING WITH PETS

Activities with pets are very limited at Canyonlands. Pets are not allowed on hiking trails, at overlooks, or anywhere in the backcountry. Pets may not accompany groups traveling by four-wheel-drive vehicle, mountain bike or boat. Pets may accompany visitors in the developed campgrounds and may be walked in the park along paved roads. Pets may also accompany visitors traversing the Potash/Shafer Canyon road between Moab and the Island in the Sky. Pets must be leashed at all times when outside a vehicle. *The desert can be deadly for pets left in cars.* We recommend you not leave pets in the car at all when temperatures are above 68 degrees, even with the windows cracked.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Canyonlands experiences wide temperature fluctuations, sometimes over 40 degrees in a single day. Summer temperatures often exceed 100°F (37°C). Late summer monsoon season brings violent storm cells which often cause flash floods. Severe lightning occurs here. Winters (November through March) are cold, with highs averaging 30° to 50°F (0° to 10°C), and lows averaging 0° to 20°F (-17° to -6°C).

EMERGENCY

Any number of emergencies can occur while you are visiting the park: hiking accidents, medical emergencies, or perhaps you have locked your keys in your vehicle. If you have an emergency:

- **Contact a park employee.** Many park rangers are trained emergency medical technicians. Law enforcement rangers can investigate vehicle accidents, handle other police matters, as well as take reports of lost hikers, fires, or other emergencies.
- **Go to the visitor center.** If the building is closed, use the pay phones in front of the building to dial 911 (no coin needed).
- **If service is available, dial 911 on your cell phone.** However, there are many areas without cell coverage in Canyonlands.

Island in the Sky

go.nps.gov/isky

THE ISLAND IN THE SKY MESA RESTS ON SHEER SANDSTONE CLIFFS over 1,000 feet above the surrounding terrain. Every overlook offers a different perspective on the park's spectacular landscape. The Island is the easiest district to visit in a short period of time, offering many pullouts with spectacular views along the paved scenic drive. Hiking trails and four-wheel-drive roads access backcountry areas for day or overnight trips.

LOCATION

To reach the Island, take US 191 to UT 313—10 miles (16 km) north of Moab, or 22 miles (35 km) south of I-70—and then drive southwest 22 miles (35 km). Driving time from Moab is roughly 40 minutes to the visitor center, or 60 minutes to Grand View Point.

BASICS

- The visitor center is open daily, spring through fall. Features include: exhibits, book and map sales, backcountry permits, general information, and park rangers on duty.
- Drinking water is available outside the visitor center spring through fall.
- Orientation movie: *Wilderness of Rock* is shown on request at the visitor center (15 minutes).
- Vault toilets are located at the visitor center, Grand View Point, Green River Overlook, Mesa Arch, Upheaval Dome, White Rim Overlook, and Willow Flat Campground. The visitor center toilets are wheelchair accessible.
- Willow Flat Campground has 12 sites, first-come, first-served. No water. No hookups. Nightly fee is \$10 per site. *Note: Fees are scheduled to increase in fall 2015.*

SCENIC DRIVE

The 34-mile roundtrip scenic drive allows visitors to tour the entire mesa top. *The Road Guide to Canyonlands - Island in the Sky District* offers an insightful narrative for the trip and can be purchased at the visitor center. A self-guided driving tour CD is also available for sale or loan. Wheelchair-accessible overlooks include Grand View Point, Green River Overlook, and Buck Canyon Overlook. There are picnic areas at White Rim Overlook and Upheaval Dome.

ACTIVITIES

- Brochures are available for Mesa Arch and Upheaval Dome trails.
- Ranger programs are presented at various times spring through fall. Check at the visitor center or campground for locations, times, and topics.

FOR KIDS

Kids can complete the Junior Ranger activities on page 11 or ask for a Junior Ranger book at any visitor center. Families can also check out an Explorer Pack filled with activities and tools to help you have fun in the park (free, one per family). For hiking, kids enjoy visiting Mesa Arch and climbing the back of the whale at Whale Rock. Use caution as there are unfenced overlooks and steep drop offs on both of these trails.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DAY

First, stop at the visitor center for current information on trails, roads, ranger programs, weather, or to watch the park movie.

If you have 2 hours: Drive to Grand View Point or Green River Overlook. Hike to Mesa Arch.

If you have 4 hours: Drive to Grand View Point, Green River Overlook, and Upheaval Dome. Hike the Grand View Point, Mesa Arch, and Upheaval Dome Overlook trails.

If you have 8 hours: Visit every overlook. Hike several mesa top trails or one of the more strenuous trails descending to the White Rim. Enjoy lunch on the trail, or picnic at White Rim Overlook or Upheaval Dome picnic areas.

If you are interested in watching sunrise/sunset: Find out sunrise and sunset times at the visitor center. Visit Mesa Arch at dawn. Visit Green River Overlook or Grand View Point at dusk for incomparable views of sunset over the canyons. Hike to the top of Aztec Butte or Whale Rock for a spectacular view of the Island in the Sky and surrounding countryside.

The Needles

go.nps.gov/theneedles

THE NEEDLES DISTRICT FORMS THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF CANYONLANDS and was named for the colorful spires of Cedar Mesa Sandstone that dominate the area. The district's extensive trail system provides many opportunities for long day hikes and overnight trips.

LOCATION

On US 191, drive 40 miles (60 km) south of Moab or 14 miles (22 km) north of Monticello, then take UT 211 roughly 35 miles (56 km) west. Highway 211 ends in the Needles, and is the only paved road leading in and out of the area.

BASICS

- The visitor center is open daily, spring through fall. Features include: exhibits, book and map sales, backcountry permits, general information, picnic area, and park rangers on duty.
- Water is available year-round at the visitor center and at some Squaw Flat Campground sites.
- Orientation movie: *Wilderness of Rock* is shown on request at the visitor center (15 minutes).
- Restrooms are available at the visitor center and Squaw Flat Campground (wheelchair accessible). There are vault toilets at Elephant Hill.
- Squaw Flat Campground has 26 sites available first-come, first-served. No hookups. Nightly fee is \$15 per site. *Note: Fees are scheduled to increase in fall 2015.*

SCENIC DRIVE

The scenic drive continues 6.5 miles past the visitor center, ending at Big Spring Canyon Overlook. Along the way are several pullouts for short hiking trails, viewpoints, and a picnic area. Graded gravel roads lead to Cave Spring and the Elephant Hill trailhead, where there is a second picnic area. The Elephant Hill access road provides the best views of the Needles from a car (about one mile from the pavement).

ACTIVITIES

- Self-guiding trails (with brochures) include Cave Spring, Pothole Point, Roadside Ruin, and Slickrock.
- During spring and fall, campfire programs are presented nightly at the Squaw Flat Campground. Check at the visitor center or campground for topics and times.

FOR KIDS

Kids can complete the Junior Ranger activities on page 11 or ask for a Junior Ranger book at any visitor center. Families can also check out an Explorer Pack filled with activities and tools to help you have fun in the park (free, one per family). The Cave Spring and Pothole Point trails are both popular hikes with kids.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR DAY

First, stop at the visitor center for current information on trails, roads, ranger programs, weather, or to watch the park movie.

If you have 2 hours:

Drive to Big Spring Canyon Overlook, and hike the Pothole Point trail along the way. Drive to a view of the Needles on the Elephant Hill access road.

If you have 4 hours:

Explore the scenic drive and graded dirt roads. Hike the Cave Spring, Pothole Point, and Roadside Ruin trails, or the longer Slickrock trail.

If you have 8 hours:

After exploring the scenic drive, hike to Chesler Park Viewpoint or around the Big Spring-Squaw Canyon loop. Enjoy lunch on the trail.

If you are interested in watching sunrise/sunset:

Find out sunrise and sunset times at the visitor center. Sunrise is spectacular from the campground area, especially along the short trail over the butte between Loops A and B. Visit Pothole Point or Wooden Shoe Arch Overlook as the glow of sunset washes over the Needles.

Looking for the Maze? The Maze is the least accessible district of Canyonlands. A trip to the Maze requires a high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle, and takes more time and self-sufficiency. See page 4 for more information about backcountry travel, including trips to the the Maze.

The Maze

go.nps.gov/themaze

The Maze is the least accessible district of Canyonlands. Due to its remoteness and the difficulty of roads and trails, travel to the Maze requires a four-wheel-drive vehicle, more time, and a greater degree of self-sufficiency. Rarely do visitors spend fewer than three days in the Maze, and the area can easily absorb a week-long trip.

VISITOR SERVICES

Hans Flat Ranger Station is open daily year-round. There is a small sales area with books and maps. **There are no services, food, gas, or potable water sources in the Maze District.** These are located in Hanksville, 68 miles (109 km), or Green River, 86 miles (138 km).

BACKCOUNTRY TRAVEL

Trails in the Maze are primitive. Many canyons look alike and are difficult to identify without a topographic map. Backpackers stay in at-large zones. Backcountry vehicle campers and mountain bikers stay in designated sites and must provide their own toilet systems. Permits are required for all overnight trips.



HORSESHOE CANYON

Horseshoe Canyon contains several intriguing rock art panels, including “The Great Gallery,” which features remarkable life-sized figures and intricate designs. Visiting every rock art panel involves a strenuous roundtrip hike of seven miles, so a trip to Horseshoe Canyon usually requires a full day.

go.nps.gov/horseshoecanyon



Questions?

For the most up-to-date information on road and trail conditions at the Maze, call Hans Flat Ranger Station: 435-259-2652

The Rivers

go.nps.gov/canyrivers

The Colorado and Green rivers wind through the heart of Canyonlands, cutting through layers of sandstone to form two deep canyons. The calm waters of these two rivers join at the Confluence, below which their combined flow spills down Cataract Canyon with remarkable speed and power, creating a world-class stretch of white water.



Flatwater trips consist of floating down either of the rivers as far as the Confluence or Spanish Bottom. There are no rapids above the Confluence in the park, making it an ideal trip for canoes, sea kayaks and other calm-water boats. Below Spanish Bottom, Cataract Canyon contains fourteen miles of rapids ranging in difficulty from Class II to V—it is a particularly hazardous and isolated section of the Colorado River and should not be attempted by inexperienced boaters. There are no facilities or potable water sources along the rivers in Canyonlands. River trips must be self-sufficient and are required to carry a cleanable, reusable toilet system.

PERMITS

Permits are required for all overnight river trips in Canyonlands, and for one-day Cataract Canyon trips (fee charged). River permits are issued at canypermits.nps.gov, and may be obtained no more than four months before a trip’s start date. Canyonlands does not restrict launch dates. The maximum group size is 40 people, though to preserve the wilderness character of the river, the park suggests groups be limited to 16. For more information on boating at Canyonlands, visit go.nps.gov/canyrivers.

Backcountry Roads









go.nps.gov/canydriving

There are hundreds of miles of four-wheel-drive roads in Canyonlands, providing access to various campsites, trailheads, and viewpoints in the park’s backcountry. These roads range in difficulty from intermediate to extremely technical. Research your route thoroughly before attempting. Check for current conditions at district visitor centers.

If you plan to enjoy the park's four-wheel-drive roads, please note:

- A high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicle (low range) is required on the White Rim Road and all Needles and Maze district backcountry roads. Other vehicles (e.g., all-wheel-drive vehicles, and low-clearance or high-clearance two-wheel-drive vehicles) have difficulty negotiating the rough slickrock, loose rocks, deep sand, and steep switchbacks.
- Permits are required for all overnight trips in the backcountry, and for day-use trips on White Rim, Elephant Hill, Lavender Canyon, and Horse Canyon/Peekaboo roads. During the spring and fall, demand for permits frequently exceeds the number available. If you plan to visit Canyonlands during peak season, especially to camp along the White Rim Road, you should make reservations well in advance.
- All vehicles must remain on established roads and be registered and operated by a licensed driver.
- ATVs, OHVs, and Utah State Type I / Type II vehicles are prohibited, even if registered. Motorbikes must be interstate highway legal.
- Pets may accompany visitors traversing the Potash/Shافر Trail road between Moab and the Island in the Sky, but pets are not allowed on the White Rim Road or any other unpaved road.



Backcountry Roads		
The Island in the Sky		
White Rim Road	 	The 100-mile White Rim Road loops around and below the Island mesa top and provides expansive views of the surrounding area. Trips usually take two to three days by four-wheel-drive vehicle or three to four days by mountain bike. Overnight and day-use permits required.
The Needles		
Elephant Hill	 	One of the most technical four-wheel-drive roads in Utah, Elephant Hill presents drivers and mountain bikers with steep grades, loose rock, stair-step drops, tight turns and tricky backing. Once over the hill, equally challenging roads lead to various features as well as BLM lands south of the park. No water is available at the campsites, but vault toilets are provided at all camping areas except New Bates Wilson. Groups camping at New Bates Wilson must bring their own toilet. Overnight and day-use permits required.
Colorado Overlook	 	Moderate road, can be sandy for mountain bikes. Visitors can avoid the large rocks and stair-step drops in the last 1.5 miles by parking on the road and walking to the overlook. (Be sure to leave room for other vehicles to pass.) Outstanding views of the Colorado River canyon. Unprotected overlook; use caution. No vehicle camping.
Horse Canyon / Peekaboo		Frequently closed due to quicksand. Permit required for day and overnight use. Roads travel along canyon bottoms where deep sand, deep water and quicksand are common. Too sandy for mountain bikes. At Peekaboo, vehicle campsites are available and prehistoric rock art may be seen. Vehicles are not permitted to drive upstream of Peekaboo in Salt Creek Canyon. Horse Canyon road leads to several arches and Tower Ruin. Overnight and day-use permits required.
Lavender Canyon		Road follows a canyon bottom where deep sand, deep water, and quicksand are common. Too sandy for mountain bikes. There are two major creek crossings with steep banks. Many arches and archeological sites may be viewed from the road. No vehicle camping inside the park. Overnight and day-use permits required.
The Maze		
Four-wheel-drive roads in the Maze are extremely difficult, present considerable risk of vehicle damage, and should not be attempted by inexperienced drivers. A high-clearance, low-range, four-wheel-drive vehicle is required for all Maze backcountry roads. (All-wheel-drive vehicles do not have the clearance or low gearing required.) Towing charges are very expensive; visitors caught in the backcountry with disabled vehicles can expect towing fees in excess of \$1,000. To plan your Maze trip, ask for the Maze backcountry handout in a visitor center or visit go.nps.gov/themaze.		

Canyonlands Hiking Guide

Island in the Sky

HIKING AT THE ISLAND IN THE SKY

Trails are marked with cairns (small rock piles). Do not disturb existing cairns or build new ones. Signs are located at trailheads and intersections. All trails leading below the mesa top are primitive and rough. No potable water is available along any of the hiking trails. Water is

available at the visitor center spring through fall. Backcountry trails generally begin on the mesa top and descend via switchbacks to the White Rim bench. A few trails continue down to one of the rivers. Most are considered strenuous, with an elevation change of 1,000-2,000 feet, and require negotiating steep slopes of loose rock as well as sections of deep sand.

Trail	Distance (round-trip)	Average Time	Description	 Toilet at trailhead
Easy - Mesa Top				
Mesa Arch 	0.5 miles (0.8 km)	30 minutes	A short hike leads to a cliff-edge arch. Mesa Arch is a classic sunrise spot, and has stunning views towards the La Sal Mountains any time of day.	
White Rim Overlook 	1.8 miles (2.8 km)	1.5 hours	Walk to an east-facing overlook for views of the Colorado River, Monument Basin, and La Sal Mountains. Best in late afternoon. <i>Very limited trailhead parking. Hikers may not park off pavement or in picnic area.</i>	
Grand View Point 	2 miles (3.2 km)	1.5 hours	A stunning ‘out-and-back,’ this walk showcases spectacular panoramic views as it follows the canyon edge.	
Murphy Point	3.6 miles (5.8 km)	2 hours	This longer hike leads past a historic corral on the mesa top. The trail ends with panoramic views of Candlestick Tower, the Green River, and the White Rim Road.	
Moderate - Mesa Top				
Upheaval Dome First Overlook 	0.8 miles (1.3 km)	1 hour	A short but steep trail leads to a clear view into the Upheaval Dome structure. Exhibits at the end of the trail discuss this unique geologic feature.	
Upheaval Dome Second Overlook 	1.8 miles (2.9 km)	1.5 hours	This trail splits off from the first overlook trail, following cairns to further views of Upheaval Dome and Canyon.	
Whale Rock	1 mile (1.6 km)	1 hour	This trail leads up the side of a sandstone dome, ending with broad views of the Island in the Sky. Be careful: steep drop-offs.	
Aztec Butte	2 miles (3.2 km)	1.5 hours	The trail follows a sandy wash, then branches.The eastern fork to your right ascends Aztec Butte for spectacular views. The western branch on the left climbs the smaller butte then drops below the rim to two ancestral Puebloan granaries. Both trails require scrambling up slick rock and ledges. <i>Entering, touching or climbing on archaeological sites is strictly prohibited. View structures from a distance to protect fragile walls.</i>	
Neck Spring	5.8 miles (9.3 km)	3 - 4 hours	A walk back in time, this loop trail passes by historic ranching features, as well as two springs where cowboys watered cattle. With minor elevation changes, this trail is a great way to see some varied plant life.	
Strenuous - Mesa Top to White Rim				
Gooseberry 	5.4 miles (8.6 km)	4 - 6 hours	The Island in the Sky's steepest trail rapidly descends 1,400 feet (427 m) to the White Rim bench. Rough switchbacks cross sheer cliffs and scree slopes. Step carefully, and don't forget to look up to take in the view.	
Syncline Loop 	8.3 miles (13.3 km)	5 - 7 hours	This challenging trail follows the canyons around Upheaval Dome, and features switchbacks, boulder fields, and a 1,300-foot (396 m) elevation change. A varied, full-day trail for experienced hikers only , most park rescues come from this trail. Carry a map, extra gallons of water, and a flashlight.	
Murphy Loop	10.8 miles (17.4 km)	5 - 7 hours	A great day hike, this trail drops off the side of the mesa top for a 1,400-foot (427 m) elevation loss. The trail offers vast views from the Murphy Hogback, then returns up a wash.	
Alcove Spring	11.2 miles (18 km)	6 - 7 hours	After descending 1,300 feet (396 m) past a large aclove, the trail meanders in a wide canyon to the base of the notable Moses and Zeus towers.	
Wilhite	12.2 miles (19.6 km)	6 - 8 hours	A primitive trail with steep switchbacks drops 1,600 feet (488 m) into a long, sandy wash. Follow the wash to the White Rim Road. No shade.	
Lathrop				
to White Rim Road	13.6 miles (22 km)	5 - 7 hours	Trail crosses open grassland, then drops 1,600 feet (488 m) into the canyon below. Enjoy views of the La Sal Mountains and fanciful sandstone knobs on this varied and challenging hike to the White Rim.	
to Colorado River	21.6 miles (34.7 km)	overnight	Continue on Lathrop Trail by walking south on the White Rim Road, then follow the Lathrop Canyon Road to the Colorado River. Cottonwoods and tamarisk offer some shade near the river. Vault toilet at end of trail. No camping at river. Backpacking permits required: see page 9. The total descent from the mesa top to the river is 2,000 feet (610 m).	
Trails along the White Rim Road <i>(These trails are not accessible from mesa top.)</i>				
Gooseneck Overlook	0.6 miles (1 km)	30 minutes	Along White Rim Road. This short walk ends abruptly at an overlook of a meandering gooseneck bend in the Colorado River. Note the rock layers distorted by salt pushing up from below.	
Fort Bottom Ruin	3 miles (4.8 km)	2 hours	Along White Rim Road. Exposed trail crosses a narrow mesa to a high point in a bend of the Green River. A tower structure marks the historic home of ancestral Puebloan people. <i>Entering, touching or climbing on archaeological sites is strictly prohibited. View structures from a distance to protect fragile walls.</i>	
Moses and Zeus	1 mile (1.6 km)	1 hour	Along White Rim Road. Trail ascends 500 feet (152m) to the base of prominent sandstone spires. No need to climb the technical routes on Moses and Zeus towers to enjoy stunning views of Taylor Canyon.	

Canyonlands Hiking Guide

The Needles



Hiking at The Needles

The Needles District offers over 60 miles of interconnecting trails, as challenging as they are rewarding. Many different itineraries are possible, but some of the more popular ones are listed below. Conditions are primitive. Most trails traverse a mixture of slickrock benches and sandy washes. Longer trails are especially rough and require negotiating steep passes with drop-offs, narrow spots, or ladders. Water in the backcountry is unreliable and scarce in some areas. Trails are marked with cairns (small rock piles).

Although most trails can be hiked in a day by strong hikers, many form loops and may be combined with other trails for longer trips. Net elevation change is generally several hundred feet or less, except for the Lower Red Lake Trail, which drops 1,400 feet to the Colorado River.

Remember—help protect park soils during your visit. Please walk on trails, rock or in sandy washes (where water flows when it rains).



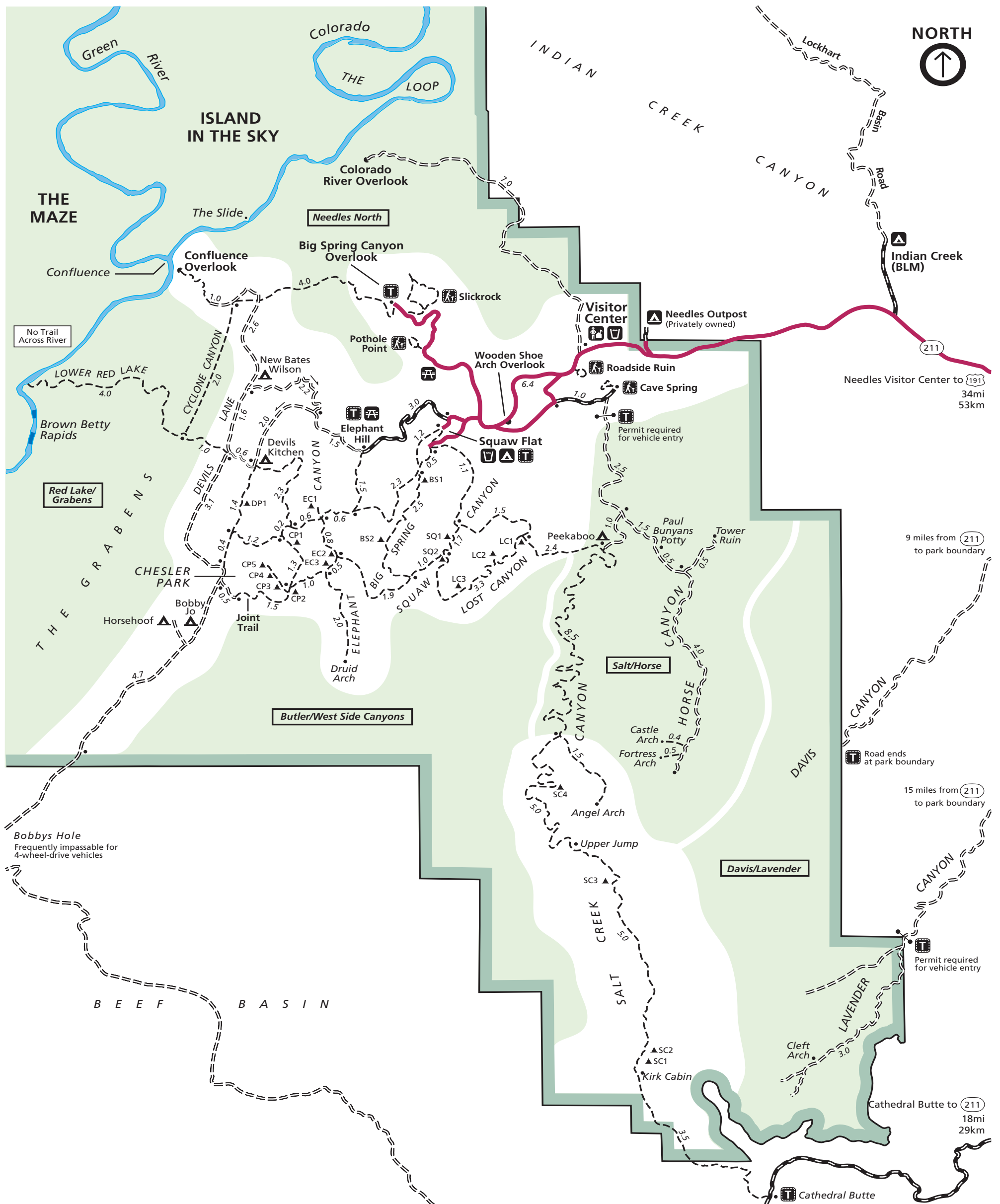
Pothole Point


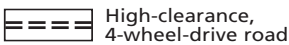

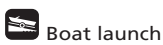

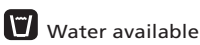
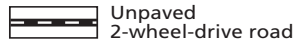



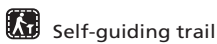

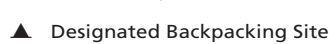
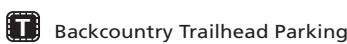



On the trail to Chesler Park

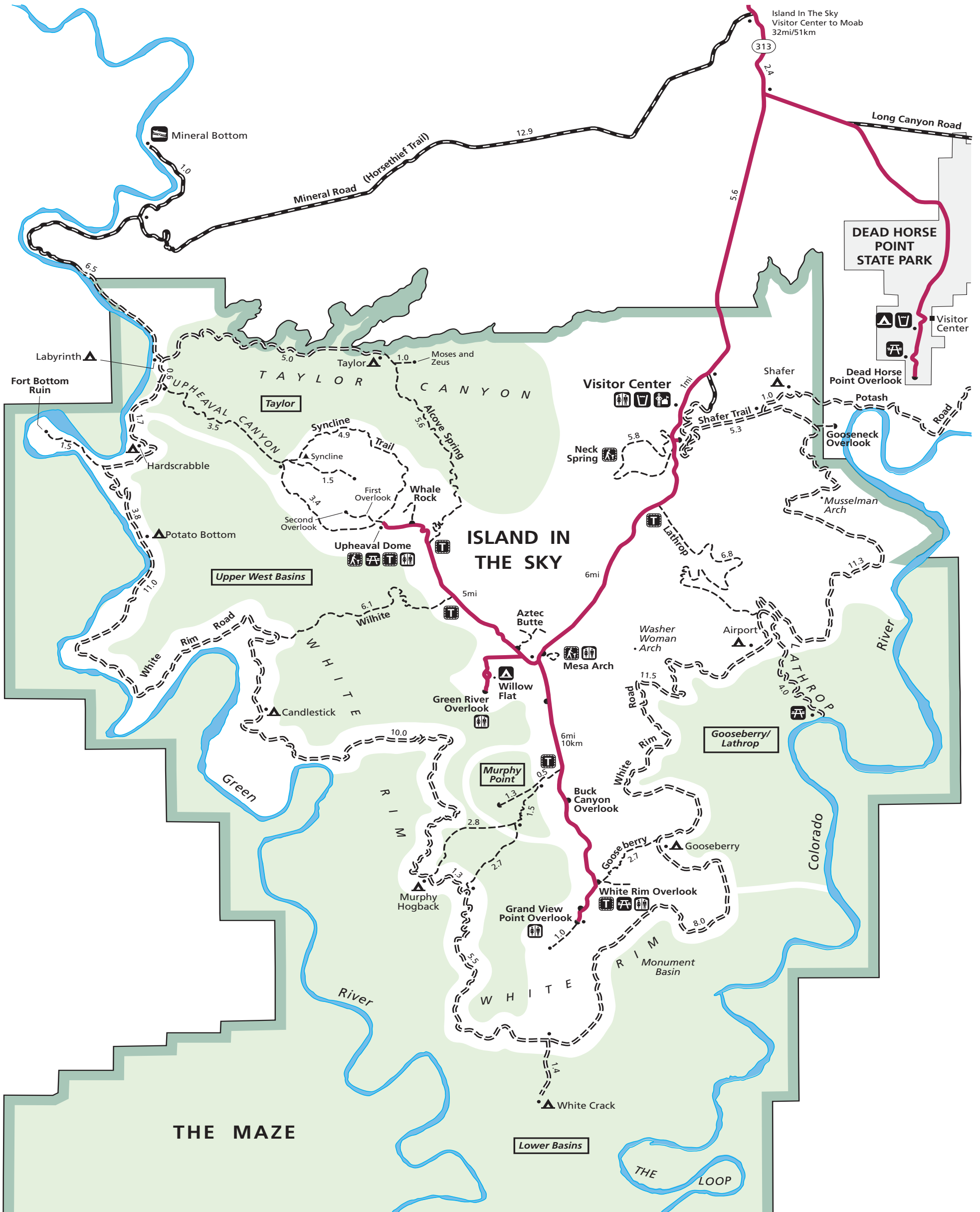
Trail	Distance (round-trip)	Average Time	Description	Toilet at trailhead	Water at trailhead
Easy					
Roadside Ruin	0.3 miles (0.5 km)	20 minutes	A short trail leads to an ancestral Puebloan granary.		
Cave Spring	0.6 miles (1.0 km)	45 minutes	This short loop leads to a historic cowboy camp and prehistoric pictographs. Two ladders must be climbed to complete the route.		
Pothole Point	0.6 miles (1.0 km)	45 minutes	Uneven slickrock leads to diverse pothole communities as well as views of the Needles. Trail follows cairns.		
Slickrock	2.4 miles (4 km)	1.5 hours	This trail features expansive 360-degree views. Geology guide available. Trail crosses uneven surfaces.		
Strenuous					
Chesler Park Viewpoint	6 miles (10 km)	3 - 4 hours	This popular trail leads to a pass overlooking a scenic expanse of desert grasses and shrubs surrounded by sandstone spires.		
Big Spring Canyon to Squaw Canyon	7.5 miles (12 km)	3 - 4 hours	A great introduction to the landscape of the Needles, connecting two canyons for a loop across varied terrain. The route between the canyons climbs steep grades that are dangerous when wet and may make people with a fear of heights uncomfortable.		
Squaw Canyon to Lost Canyon	8.7 miles (14 km)	4 - 6 hours	Another wonderful loop hike with some difficult sections climbing between the two canyons. Riparian areas in both canyons attract birds and other wildlife. Route in Lost Canyon passes through dense vegetation and may be very wet. One ladder must be climbed.		
Confluence Overlook	10 miles (16.5 km)	5 - 6 hours	Unlike other Needles hikes, this trail traverses dry, open country along the northern edge of the geologic faults that shaped the Needles. Trail ends at a cliff overlooking the junction of the Green and Colorado rivers 1,000 feet below.		
Peekaboo	10 miles (16.5km)	5 - 6 hours	This trail crosses both Squaw and Lost canyons on its way to Salt Creek Canyon, passing along high slickrock benches with spectacular views. Steep slopes and nearby cliff edges make this a challenging route. Two ladders must be climbed. Prehistoric rock art panel may be seen at the end of the trail near Peekaboo camp.		
Big Spring Canyon to Elephant Canyon	10.8 miles (17 km)	4 - 6 hours	This loop features extended hiking on slickrock benches and mesa tops overlooking canyons. Excellent views of sheer cliff walls and other rock formations. Two ladders must be climbed in the pass between the canyons.		
Druid Arch	11 miles (18 km)	5 - 7 hours	This trail offers one of the most spectacular views in the Needles. It follows the first part of the Chesler Park trail, then branches off to travel along the bottom of Elephant Canyon through deep sand and loose rock. The last 0.25 mile at the upper end is steep with one ladder and some scrambling.		
Chesler Park Loop / Joint Trail	11 miles (18 km)	5 - 7 hours	This trail provides many great panoramas of the Needles formations. The Joint Trail winds through deep, narrow fractures in the rock. A shorter, out-and-back option takes you to the Chesler Park Viewpoint in about 6 miles round-trip.		

NOTE: White shading within Canyonlands indicates areas with designated site camping only.



 Paved road/ Pull out	 High-clearance, 4-wheel-drive road	 At-large Backpacking Zone	 Boat launch	 Developed Campground	 Water available
 Unpaved 2-wheel-drive road	 Hiking Trail	<div><div><div>Name</div></div></div> Name of Backpacking Zone	 Ranger station	 Backcountry Vehicle Camp	 Self-guiding trail
			 Picnic area	 Designated Backpacking Site	 Backcountry Trailhead Parking
					 Toilet

NOTE: White shading within Canyonlands indicates areas with designated site camping only.



Permits

Much of Canyonlands is managed for its primitive character, so the park is a popular destination for backcountry travel. Hundreds of miles of rugged trails and roads wind through the park. Activities requiring a permit include backpacking, four-wheel-drive and mountain bike camping, river trips, and four-wheel-drive and mountain bike day use on Elephant Hill, Horse Canyon, and Lavender Canyon roads in the Needles district, and the White Rim Road in the Island in the Sky district. Fees are charged and group size limits apply (see chart at right).

LENGTH OF STAY

Permits (except day use) can be issued for up to fourteen consecutive nights. Backpackers may stay up to seven consecutive nights in any one site or zone (ten nights in the Maze zones). Visitors using the designated vehicle camps may stay a maximum of three consecutive nights at a site before having to relocate to another area.

OBTAINING A PERMIT

You can check permit availability and make reservations online. Overnight permits are

available up to four months in advance at canypermits.nps.gov. If available, permits are also issued in person seven days a week at district visitor centers. Walk-in river permits are usually issued from the Reservation Office in Moab, which is open Monday through Friday. Campsites or permits not reserved in advance may be available first-come, first-served at district visitor centers.

Visitors interested in White Rim trips, Needles backpacking trips during spring and fall, and Needles group sites throughout the year should apply as early as possible.

SITES AND ZONES

In order to protect park resources and prevent crowding, the backcountry of Canyonlands is divided into sites and zones, and access to each is limited. Designated sites for vehicles and bicycles exist along all four-wheel-drive roads. There are also sites for backpackers along some hiking trails, mostly in the Needles District. In remote areas where travel is limited to foot or boat, visitors stay in at-large zones and may choose their own *minimum-impact* campsites.

WATER

Water is a limiting factor for most backcountry trips in Canyonlands. *Before beginning your trip, check at park visitor centers for reliable water sources.* There are some springs scattered throughout the park, mostly in canyon bottoms, but there are also large areas such as the Grabens in the Needles, and the entire White Rim bench at the Island in the Sky, where there is no water. Hikers are encouraged to pack in water whenever possible. Some springs shown on maps may dry up during periods of drought. Plan on needing at least 1 gallon (4 L) per person per day.

QUESTIONS?

Reservation Office staff can be reached by email at canyres@nps.gov. Staff are also available to answer questions and assist with trip planning by phone Monday through Friday, 8 am to 12 noon (Mountain Time), at (435) 259-4351. When workload permits, phones may be answered until 4 pm.

Fees & Group Sizes	
Activity (Fee)	Group Size Limit (per permit)
4WD Day Use (Free)	1 vehicle
Backpacking (\$30)	Island in the Sky: 7 Needles: 7 Maze: 5
4WD / Mtn. Bike (\$30)	Island in the Sky: 15 (limit 3 vehicles) Needles: 10 (limit 3 vehicles) Maze: 9 (limit 3 vehicles)
River Trips (\$30) +\$20 per person	40
Needles Group Sites (Fees vary based on group size.)	Split Top: 15 (limit 3 vehicles) Wooden Shoe: 25 (limit 5 vehicles) Squaw Flat: 50 (limit 10 vehicles)

Preserving the Past

Many first-time visitors to Canyonlands National Park may not realize that the park was established not only for its scenic beauty, but also for its significant archeological features. In the Needles district, Salt Creek Canyon holds the park's highest concentration of archeological sites, particularly many structures constructed by the ancestral Puebloan and Fremont people.

These sites are included within the Salt Creek Archeological District, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and are among the most visited backcountry sites in the Needles district. Erosion has destabilized standing architecture and has damaged fragile cultural deposits such as floor surfaces and hearths. Additionally, increased social trails and vandalism have resulted in a loss of valuable information about the sites and their people.

Because these sites are frequently visited and are an important source of information on prehistoric life within the park, archeologists spent several weeks in May 2015 preserving the structures and features at Salt Creek.

Park staff stabilized structures by repointing mortar joints, replacing deteriorated wall stones and tightening loose masonry with stone wedges. Vulnerable earthen storage features called cists were back-filled and buried with sand from nearby washes. A protective cloth was laid down prior to backfilling to separate the original surfaces from backfill materials.

Filling in these subterranean cists helps to protect the undercut walls and fragile edges from collapse while preserving information about their builders. Burying original floor surfaces and intact cultural deposits also helps to preserve important data that could yield information on when people lived in Salt Creek, what they ate, and what kind of environmental conditions they had to contend with.

Taking these actions will help ensure that people can continue to experience these sites, while protecting them from further damage and loss.



Park staff used sand from nearby washes to fill fragile storage structures and to cover floor surfaces. These surfaces can contain ash and charcoal that could tell archeologists about the original occupants of these places. Covering these floors ensures this information is protected.

Here are some ways that you can help:

- Stay on designated trails or slickrock, if available. If you see an archeological site in the backcountry, enjoy it from a distance. This will lessen the risk of damaging fragile cultural features.
- Leave artifacts in place. When you pick up artifacts without replacing them, information about the objects is lost.
- Be careful not to disrupt structures. Don't walk on or over walls, and don't enter structures. Some have been standing as long as 1,100 years. These structures could be unstable and could be damaged with the slightest pressure.
- Enjoy rock art with your eyes. Touching or making rubbings of rock art will damage fragile pigments and rock surfaces. Take pictures, or sketch what you see.
- Please promote a sense of discovery by not sharing site locations or GPS coordinates of sites that you find.
- Finally, but most importantly—visit with respect. Canyonlands contains hallowed ground for people who still honor and hold these places as sacred. Help us conserve our heritage.



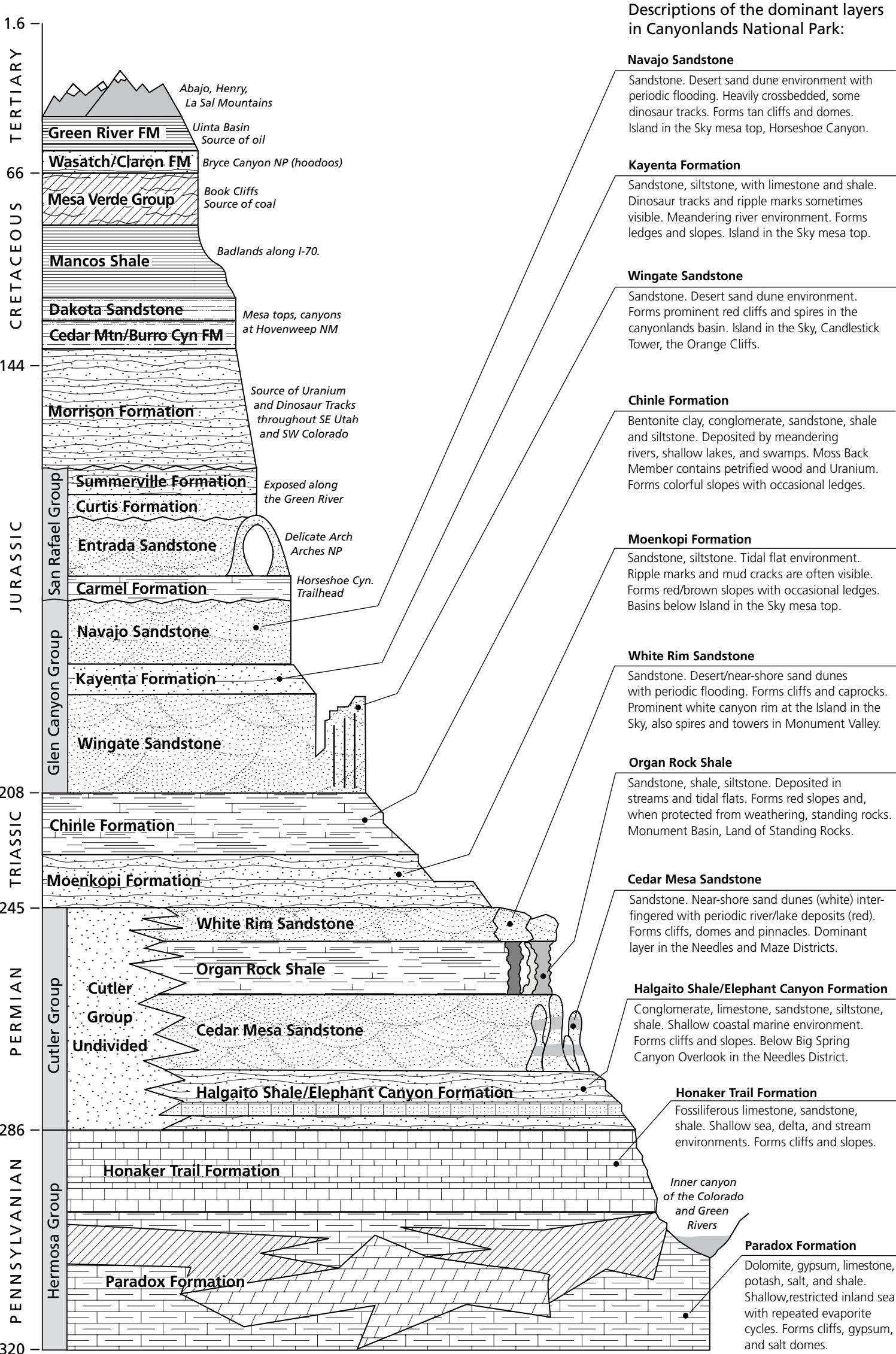
Doing Our Part

Activities outside the park affect the lands within, and our actions alter the world outside. To address these relationships, Canyonlands National Park has established an Environmental Management System, a plan that seeks to make park operations more environmentally responsible.

- The plan provides concrete ways to decrease our impacts such as:
- Reducing our waste production and diverting more material away from the landfill through smart recycling.
 - Reducing our fuel consumption by choosing appropriate types of vehicles and arranging carpools.
 - Reducing greenhouse gas production in park operations through renewable energy use and efficient buildings and equipment.

You can help by using recycling bins located in the park. Ask at visitor centers for more information.

Canyonlands Geology



Geology A Window in Time

Canyonlands National Park is a showcase of geology. In each of the park’s districts, visitors can see the remarkable effects of millions of years of erosion on a landscape of sedimentary rock.

Deposition
Most of the rock found in Canyonlands today came from distant mountain ranges like the ancestral Rockies and even the Appalachians. For millions of years, rock was broken down and carried here by wind and water, creating deposits that eventually became distinct layers of sedimentary rock. Some layers were laid down by rivers, and wind brought some of the thickest layers, creating vast sand deserts or dune fields on the shores of an ancient sea.

Accumulating rock created a geologic layer cake, with most of the material hidden below the surface. But change was coming...

Uplift
Many of the rocks exposed in Canyonlands were deposited near sea level. Today, the average elevation here is over 5,000 feet above sea level – a significant uplift.

Canyonlands is part of the Colorado Plateau, an area that stands high above the surrounding country. About 20 million years ago, movement in the Earth’s crust began to alter the landscape of North America, building modern landforms like the Rocky Mountains, Nevada’s Basin and Range, and the Colorado Plateau.

Erosion
Today’s landscape is one of erosion. As this area gradually rose, rivers that once deposited sediment on the lowlands began to remove it from the emerging plateau. The Green and Colorado rivers began carving into the geologic layer cake, exposing buried sediments and creating the canyons of Canyonlands.

Rivers aren’t the only force of erosion. Summer thunderstorms bring heavy rains that scour the landscape. Some layers erode more easily than others. As rock dissolves away, layers of harder rock form exposed shelves, giving the canyon walls their stair-step appearance.

As the work of erosion continues, today’s geologic displays will eventually disappear, making way for future wonders.



Complete six activities for your age group. Bring your Junior Ranger activity page to a visitor center and share your experiences with a ranger to receive your official Junior Ranger badge!



Age 7 and under: do at least six activities marked with the Leapin' Lizard



Ages 8 to 10: do at least six activities marked with the Rowdy Rabbit



Ages 11 and up: do at least six activities marked with the Bouncin' Bighorn



☐ 1. Go for a Hike



Hike on a trail, or go to an overlook. Sit down and look around. Look at the maps on pages 7 and 8. Trace the trail you hiked.



Draw a picture of something you want to remember.



Describe what you want to remember and how it made you feel.

☐ 2. Secrets in the Soil



Take two pictures of biological soil crust — one healthy and one damaged. Draw a triangle on the map where you took your pictures.

Search the newspaper for information about crust.



Write one way the crust helps the desert and one way to protect it.



Write two ways the crust helps the desert and one way to protect it.

☐ 3. Park Memories



Answer these questions:

What makes the park special to you?

What did you learn while you were here?

What can you do to take care of the park?

Who will you tell about your trip once you go home?

☐ 4. Attend a ranger program, or watch the park movie



Which program did you attend?



Write something you learned.

☐ 5. Animals live here too...



Take a picture of an animal or a sign of an animal such as a track, scat, or animal home. Draw a star on the map where you took your picture.



Name the animal.



How does the animal survive in the desert?



What do you think it eats? What might eat it?

☐ 6. Park Poetry



Cinquain poems consist of five lines that do not need to rhyme. Follow the steps below to write your own poem about something you have seen at Canyonlands.

Line 1: One word, the subject of your poem (what the poem is about).

Line 2: Two words that describe the subject.

Line 3: Three action words the subject does.

Line 4: A phrase (4 to 5 words) that further describes the subject.

Line 5: One final word that renames the poem's subject (a synonym).

☐ 7. Staying Safe

Search the newspaper for safety tips.



Write down something you should take on a hike.



Write down three things you should take on a hike.



In the newspaper, circle eight tips for staying safe while visiting Canyonlands

I certify that _____
has earned a Junior Ranger Badge

Signature of Ranger

Date

Art in the Parks

“When I woke up this morning, I had no idea I’d be sketching. People back home are never going to believe this,” said Tom from Wisconsin, a self-proclaimed non-artist who happened upon the most recent “sketch crawl” (where people go from location to location together and sketch).

Sketching is fun, engaging, and a totally different way to experience the national parks. More than 20 years ago, Katrina Lund, the 2015 Community Artist in the Parks, stumbled upon sketching by accident. She wanted to capture a picture, but forgot her camera. Instead, she found a pen and paper in her car, and she was hooked. Katrina is excited to share her passion with visitors. “Sketching is a tool I use to deepen my experience of a place and to remember how these striking desert landscapes make me feel. When I stop to draw something, I see all the details I would miss if I just took a photograph.”



Joy, a professional artist from Park City, Utah, was inspired by the sketch crawl announcement and brought her easel and oil paints out the next day to paint. For Bridget, an 11-year-old girl with autism, the sketch crawl was her first *plein air* landscape experience and she loved it. She’ll still draw her beloved cats, but now she’s inspired to capture the landscape around her.

“You don’t have to consider yourself an ‘artist’ to feel the joy and magic of sketching and truly connecting on a different level to these wild and beautiful places,” Katrina says. Most likely, your sketch will mean more than a photograph because it’s your expression of this beautiful landscape and will bring back a flood of memories of what it felt like to be in Canyonlands National Park.



Created in 2009, the Community Artist in the Parks program fosters inspiration and appreciation of the landscape among visitors by giving them the unique opportunity to watch local artists translate the scenery of the parks into a work of art. A local artist offers programs in national parks in southeast Utah from April to October. Check at visitor centers for times and locations, or visit go.nps.gov/CAIP.



Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks

The Friends of Arches and Canyonlands Parks: Bates Wilson Legacy Fund provides direct support to Arches and Canyonlands national parks and Natural Bridges and Hovenweep national monuments in order to enhance existing projects in these spectacular areas, and to conserve the land and its cultural treasures for present and future generations to enjoy.

This mission honors the legendary work of Superintendent Bates Wilson, who came to Arches in 1949, inspiring and leading the effort that resulted in the establishment of Canyonlands National Park in 1964. He is regarded by many as the “Father of Canyonlands.”

Bates Wilson firmly believed that:

- The **park visitor** must have a great experience;
- **Exploratory and educational** opportunities must abound;
- **Preservation** is our obligation to future generations;
- **Youth** indeed are the future: Bates enhanced the lives of countless young people as they explored and learned to appreciate the parks with him.

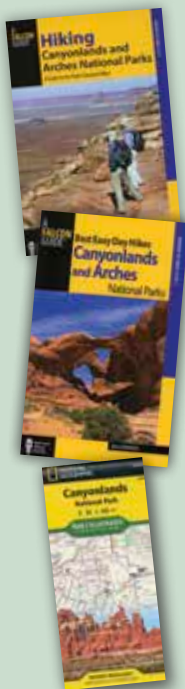
Please visit www.foacp.org to learn more and make your donation. Thanks!



Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA) is the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management in southeast Utah. Since 1967, CNHA has donated over 10.5 million dollars to these federal partners.

CNHA sells hundreds of items about Canyonlands National Park and the rest of Utah’s canyon country. If the park visitor center is closed, please visit the Moab Information Center in downtown Moab (corner of Center & Main).

Your purchase supports Canyonlands National Park.



Hiking Canyonlands and Arches National Parks #3667

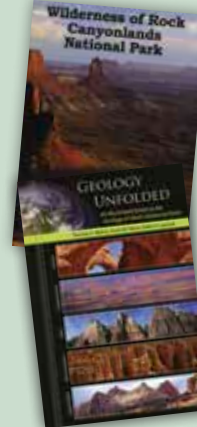
The most comprehensive guide available to the trails and backcountry roads in these parks. Invaluable information about trip planning and NPS regulations. Photos and maps. 226 pp.

Best Easy Day Hikes Canyonlands and Arches National Parks #1392

A handy, pocket-sized trail guide with descriptions and maps of twenty-one short hikes in these two parks. 88 pp.

Canyonlands Trails Illustrated Map #685

This topographic map lists roads, trails, campgrounds and many points of interest in the Needles, Island in the Sky, and Maze districts of the park.



Wilderness of Rock (DVD) #2541

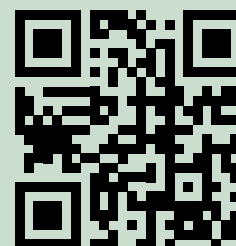
A great introduction to the landscape of Canyonlands. This orientation video is shown in the park’s visitor centers. 15 minutes.

Geology Unfolded Utah’s National Parks #3441

A succinct and well-illustrated guide that answers the most often asked questions about the geology of Utah’s National Parks.

BECOME A MEMBER

CNHA members enjoy many benefits, including a 15% discount on purchases of \$1 or more. For more information, please call us or visit our website at www.cnha.org.



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